



## **EXPANDED AGRIBUSINESS AND TRADE PROMOTION (USAID E-ATP)**

*In fulfillment of the following deliverable under task 3.4.2:*

### **Best practice guide to build public and private cooperation for preparedness and response**

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# **IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND TRADE OF HATCHING EGGS AND DAY-OLD-CHICKS: A GUIDE FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS**

## **EXPANDED AGRIBUSINESS AND TRADE PROMOTION (E-ATP) PROJECT**

**2013**

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Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion  
(E-ATP) Project

## **DISCLAIMER**

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the United States Government.

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# ACRONYMS

<b>AI</b>	Avian influenza
<b>ATP</b>	Agribusiness and Trade Promotion project
<b>DOC</b>	Day-old chick
<b>E-ATP</b>	Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion project
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States ( <i>CEDEAO</i> )
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FCFA</b>	CFA Franc
<b>GNAPF</b>	Ghana National Association of Poultry Farmers
<b>HE</b>	Hatching egg
<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernmental organization
<b>NSC</b>	National sanitary commission or committee
<b>PAN</b>	Poultry Association of Nigeria
<b>OIE</b>	World Organization for Animal Health
<b>UOFA</b>	<i>Union des Organisations de la Filière Avicole</i>
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WAEMU</b>	West African Economic and Monetary Union ( <i>UEMOA</i> )

# I. EXPERIENCES IN WEST AFRICA

## I.1 CONTEXT

The USAID Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion (E-ATP) project is a three-year initiative aiming at promoting trade in agricultural products across West Africa. The project covers eight countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo) and targets three value chains (poultry, rice and millet/sorghum) in addition to the three initially targeted under the Agribusiness and Trade Promotion (ATP) project (livestock, onions/shallot and maize).

The implementation of good practices for the production of hatching eggs (HE) and day-old chicks (DOCs) is one component of the poultry value chain activities. Through collaboration with producers, it aims to improve the sanitary status of DOCs in West Africa in order to facilitate national and international movement of poultry across the sub-region.

The limited number of DOC producers in the area (roughly 50) suggests that this activity has the potential to have a major impact on the whole value chain, poultry product quality being directly dependent on DOC production. Following the avian influenza (AI) outbreaks in West Africa between 2006 and 2009, it is or will be difficult for governments to self-declare their country free of AI; consequently, sanitary barriers to trade may remain or be reinstalled (and might also favor illegal or non-OIE-standard-compliant exchanges).

DOC producers may be considered as “compartment” that has a different official status than the rest of the country, and it may be easier for public veterinary services to self-declare and maintain those compartments free of AI, than it would be for the whole country. Detailed explanation on the “compartment” concept can be found on [www.oie.int](http://www.oie.int) website.

This initiative will allow the implementation of a quality approach to which DOC producers may subscribe on a voluntary basis, in order to set up a network of producers across West Africa that follow the same quality standards. A close collaboration with national veterinary services will facilitate the sanitary certification of DOCs for cross-border trade. In addition, a regular follow up of farms and hatcheries by official veterinary laboratories will improve the sanitary monitoring of the involved farms. An appropriate communication will also be developed in order to inform DOC producers' customers about this initiative and allow producers to use it as a commercial argument to seek for new markets.

## I.2 EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE USAID E-ATP INITIATIVE

### I.2.1 ACTIVITIES

- An **initial assessment** was conducted between **October 2009 and January 2010**. A large number of stakeholders were visited. The opportunity for the project to work on the improvement of the quality and of the trade of HE and DOCs emerged during these interactions.
- In **August 2010, two veterinary experts from ASVELIS visited ten DOC producers** in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. This was essential to get a clear idea of how far or how close these producers were to being compliant with international standards.
- In **August 2010**, several public and private stakeholders from the sub-region met in **Accra** (Ghana). The results of the above field visits were presented and discussed. The proposal to launch the initiative on DOCs was well accepted on that day by all stakeholders.

- The next step was for the ASVELIS consultants to write a **draft document: *Good Practices for Poultry Breeding Flocks and Hatcheries in West Africa***.

One of the findings of the assessment missions was that no reference document was available for hatching eggs and DOC producers in West Africa. In countries where the poultry industry is highly developed, such a document defines general good practices expected from producers, as harmonized with national and international regulations. One of the issues in West Africa is the lack of harmonized legislation regarding the trade of DOCs and HEs. This limits exchanges of these products in the sub-region. On the basis of existing documents, the team developed a good practices guide for HE and DOC producers, adapted to the context of the West Africa.

- **Field trip – November 2010**

The third mission aimed at presenting the objectives of the component to most of the stakeholders (including producers, veterinary services, national veterinary laboratories, international organizations) in Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria. It was also an opportunity to introduce the project's *Good Practices Guide* to stakeholders, and amend based on the comments and suggestions of local professionals.

During this field trip, the stakeholders from the five countries renewed their interest in the project and willingness to be involved. Beside the consultations with producers and veterinary services, the E-ATP team met with representatives of the WAEMU livestock office as well as with animal health experts from FAO. WAEMU representatives expressed their willingness to be actively involved in the initiative, especially regarding the issues of legislation harmonization, on which they are currently working through the Veterinary Board.

FAO's program was converging with E-ATP project on two main topics:

- The set-up of a unique certificate for the exports of poultry and poultry products across ECOWAS countries. The certificate has been designed, reviewed and tested in the area but has yet to be approved by the ECOWAS' administration.
- The need for West African national veterinary laboratories to develop their activities through services to the livestock and poultry industry.

- **Training & Consultation - Accra & Dakar – April 2011**

A training seminar has been organized in two locations by the project. The first session was in Accra (Ghana) for English-speaking participants (from Ghana, Nigeria and Togolese). The second one was organized in Dakar (Senegal) for francophone participants (from Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Benin and Togo). The participants were:

- DOC producers
- Representatives of the national veterinary services from each country,
- Representatives of the national veterinary laboratories from each country,
- Representatives of other organizations (NGOs, national development programs, etc.)

Resource people (in addition to the E-ATP staff and consultants) were sent by international companies related to poultry business (genetic, feed, drug, material companies).

The point of this seminar was to gather stakeholders of the poultry industry together with main inputs suppliers and facilitate the development of a network related to DOC production in West Africa.

Technical inputs as well as technical documents were mainly provided by the companies with some support from E-ATP consultants. In addition, the seminars were an opportunity to discuss the action plan of the initiative and start planning the remaining activities.

The main achievement of these meetings (in addition to the technical inputs) was the decision that emerged from them to set up a technical committee in each country, in charge of evaluating the hatcheries and breeding farms and their practices after a certification visit and the implementation of a health monitoring program.



- **Set up of national sanitary commissions or committees (NSCs)**

After the March-April 2011 meetings, the stakeholders met in their respective countries in order to select members. The composition of the NSCs could vary according to the national context and needs. NSCs have been set up in Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria. Their members are presented below.

- **OIE Annual Meeting – May 2011**

To further advocate for national veterinary services and inform regional organizations about the initiative, one ASVELIS consultant attended the Annual Meeting of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in Paris.

- **Health program and estimated costs for the sampling and the laboratory analyses**

One of the barriers to the trade of DOCs and HEs in West Africa is the lack of routine monitoring of disease within the sub-region. This can be explained both by the lack of such practices in most breeders' farms and the difficulty for laboratories to supply this service to producers. One of the constraints is the difficulty for laboratories to plan the supply of reagents and consumables due to the irregular and low demand for analysis. Having an agreement with producers for regular routine analysis would allow them to supply the material and provide the service. In agreement with all stakeholders, hatcheries and parent farms should be monitored for the following diseases:

- Avian Influenza (regular serology)
- Newcastle Disease (regular serology)
- Salmonellosis : *Salmonella galinarum pullorum*, *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium* (for each batch)
- Mycoplasmosis : *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and *Mycoplasma synoviae* (for each batch)

The sampling protocol which was designed remains within the financial capacities of the operators, and should not dissuade sampling (the cost of the analysis is evaluated to FCFA 5 for a small unit of 2,000 parents).

- **Training & Consultation - Dakar – July 2011**

A workshop was organized in Dakar in July 2011 in order to train two experts in each country on the methodology of certification visits for hatcheries and breeding farms. The objectives of the training were to:

- Inform the selected experts to conduct certification visits about the approach initiated for DOCs and HEs producers in West Africa.
- Train them on a methodology to conduct certification visits in hatcheries and breeders farm.
- Strengthen their technical knowledge and supply them with a set of documents needed to conduct those visits.
- Implement this new technical knowledge in a practical manner through farms and hatcheries visits.
- Plan the implementation of the certification visits in each of the seven target countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo).

The lecture sessions were completed by two visits to hatcheries and breeder farms during which theoretical knowledge provided during the training were put into practice.

- **Writing of a document to guide the public and private cooperation on this initiative (present document)**

The AI component of the E-ATP project has involved numerous stakeholders both from public and private sectors. From public services, national veterinary services were informed and consulted; from

private sector, in addition to HE and DOC producers, private veterinarians, industry representatives (genetics, drug and feed suppliers, etc.) participated in various activities. In the control of infectious diseases, the participation and collaboration of all sectors are needed, and the present document is an opportunity to capitalize on this experience and draw lessons from the activities undertaken.

- **Compilation of educational materials**

During the five missions, stakeholders were provided with an extensive set of technical documents on farm management, veterinary sciences, international legislation, etc. All of these documents have been compiled in a CD and on [www.goodpracticespoultry.org](http://www.goodpracticespoultry.org).

- **Ouagadougou – September 2011**

A final workshop was organized in Ouagadougou on the 14 and 15 September 2011 in order to assess the progress recorded in each country since the beginning of the initiative. Country representatives presented the situation: set-up, composition of the NSCs, audit visits, lab analysis, constraints faced, etc. The workshop also provided the opportunity to draft recommendations for the future and an action plan for the following year.

## 1.2.2 RESULTS

### List of participating producers

Producer Name Nom	Country Pays	Technical Training Formation		Audited between June & Sept. 2011 Audit�� entre juin et Sept 2011	Samples sent to laboratory between June & Sept. 2011 Analyses de labo entre juin et Sept
		08/2010 (Accra)	04/2011 (Accra/Dakar)		
Couvoir la R��f��rence	Benin			Yes	
Poussins du Roi	Benin			Yes	
CAB	Burkina Faso		Yes	Yes	
Akate Farms	Ghana	Yes	Yes		
Jerusalem Farms	Ghana	Yes	Yes		
Darko Farms	Ghana	Yes	Yes		
Agro Age	Ghana		Yes		
Mali Poussin	Mali		Yes		
Famsodouf	Mali		Yes		
Cocorico	Mali		Yes		
W��r��bougou	Mali		Yes		
V��to Service	Mali				
Obasanjo Farms	Nigeria		Yes		
Macks Farms	Nigeria		Yes		
Dansof Farms	Nigeria		Yes		
Chi Ajanwa	Nigeria		Yes		
Grema Farms	Nigeria		Yes		
Zarthech	Nigeria		Yes		
SEEMAP	Senegal		Yes		
SEDIMA	Senegal		Yes		
Couvoir d'Eden	Togo		Yes	Yes	Yes
Couvoir le Poussin	Togo		Yes	Yes	Yes
Couvoir Tchimarou	Togo		Yes	Yes	Yes
Couvoir de l'Universit��	Togo			Yes	Yes
Couvoir du Golfe	Togo	Operations starting end of year 2011			
Couvoir Pya	Togo	Operations starting end of year 2011			

### Set up and running of NSCs

	<b>Benin</b>	<b>Burkina Faso</b>	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Mali</b>	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>Senegal</b>	<b>Togo</b>
<b>Set up</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Members</b>	Total: 10 (details in annex)		Total: 4 (details in annex)	Total: 9 (details in annex)	Total: 11 (details in annex)	n/a	Total: 7 (details in annex)
<b>Umbrella institution</b>	Livestock department		GNAPF	Vet services	PAN		
<b>Activities implemented</b>	Nomination of the auditors ; sensitization of stakeholders, auditing visits implementation	Nomination of the auditors ; sensitization of stakeholders, training of the auditors and auditing visit of Bobo hatchery	Nomination of the auditors ; stakeholders' sensitization visits, planning of the auditing visits	Nomination of the auditors ; sensitization of stakeholders; Institutional set up of the NSC; preparatory work on the funding of the activities	Nomination of the auditors ; sensitization of stakeholders, set up of the funding system, planning of the auditing visits and lab analysis, selection of pilot operators		Nomination of the auditors ; sensitization of stakeholders, auditing visits implementation (including lab analysis)
<b>Planned activities for 4Q11</b>	Finalization of audits reports	Finalization of audits reports; 2 <sup>nd</sup> visit to collect samples	Implementation of the visits and lab analysis	Contact with donors for funding the analysis costs, set up of an office, set up of a contribution from producers (CFA 5 per chick) to fund the running costs of the NSC	Implementation of the auditing visits and lab analysis		Finalization of audits reports, Set up of an hatchery / breeding farm association ; NSC meeting
<b>Total number of producers</b>	4 (2 officially declared)	1	10	4 private operators+ Institut Polytechnique Rural + 1 ostriches hatchery	More than 40	+/- 10	6 (2 will start operating by end 2011)
<b>Number of producers engaged in the initiative</b>	2	1	8	4	7	2	6

### Experts trained to audit producers (Dakar – July 2011)

Name	Academic background	Organization	Country	Audits conducted between June & Sept. 2011
Urbain Fanou	Veterinarian	Private practice	Benin	2 / 2
Coffi Vodjo	Veterinarian	Private practice	Benin	2 / 2
Maurice Ouedraogo	Veterinarian	Nat. Vet Laboratory	Burkina Faso	1 / 1
Seydou Ouattara	Livestock ingeneer	CPAVI	Burkina Faso	
Stephen Ockling	Veterinarian	Vet services	Ghana	
John Edusei	Veterinarian	Private practice	Ghana	
Yaya Dolo	Veterinarian	Private practice	Mali	
Abdulaye Kone	Veterinarian	Private practice	Mali	
Anthony Adjayi	Veterinarian	Private practice	Nigeria	
Dawuda Mari	Veterinarian	Private practice	Nigeria	
Fatou Tall	Veterinarian	Nat. Vet Laboratory	Senegal	
Elhadji M. Diouf	Veterinarian	Private practice	Senegal	
Steve Pato	Veterinarian	Private practice	Togo	4/4
Kalsoumi Toure Wolou	Livestock ingeneer	Livestock department	Togo	4/4

## 1.2.3 DISCUSSION OF SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

### Keys to the success of the program

- **Limited funds are needed to continue and costs are within the financial reach of hatcheries.**

With regards to the implementation of the program at the national level (that is set-up of national NSCs, sensitization of stakeholders, meetings organization, conducting of first auditing visits), support (especially financial) from E-ATP has been limited. This shows the appropriateness of the program relative to the needs and expectations of the stakeholders.

Budget simulations on the running costs needed to fund NSC activities and audit visits have been conducted. Depending on the size of the country, and the number and locations of the producers, the calculated costs fall between USD 1,500 and 6,000—that is USD 500 to 1,000 per operator on average. In most cases, this can be covered by a fee paid by the operators (annual fee or contribution per chick).

Nevertheless, for the launch of the initiative, it may be necessary to find external sources of support to encourage the involvement of stakeholders. Several options can be explored, including financing from regional institutions such as WAEMU or ECOWAS, and support from other development partners.

- **Hatcheries realize the potential return on investment (better access to domestic and export markets).**

Modern poultry production is growing quickly in West Africa, increasing demand for DOCs. Currently, egg and poultry meat producers often prefer to supply their DOCs from Europe or Brazil hatcheries, as they offer more quality guaranties. Often, in case of a problem at the farm level, producers invoke the poor quality of the chicks (supposed or actual). In this context, West African DOC producers realize that upgrading the quality of their chicks and being able to demonstrate it to their customers will be an asset to restore a trusting relationship with them and develop market opportunities.

With regards to sub-regional trade of DOCs, the current situation in West Africa—where some countries have yet to be declared AI-free (even though no outbreak occurred since 2009)—is not

favorable for cross-border trade. In Ghana for example, hatcheries are running at less than 50 % of their capacity because of the collapse of broiler production after the import of frozen poultry meat was authorized. Increasing demand in Burkina Faso could represent new market opportunities for Ghanaian producers, provided their status with respect to AI and other notifiable diseases is monitored and certified by veterinary authorities.

More generally, producers involved in the program are important investors and do realize that for a moderate investment (relative to other operational costs), the commercial impact can be significant with proper communication, and that certifying the quality of DOCs produced in West Africa is a necessary step to be able to compete with producers from other regions such as Europe or Brazil.

- **Working to reach international standards brings motivation.**

Most stakeholders realize that if the quality of the chicks produced in West Africa suffices for domestic markets, where competition is limited and demand important, reaching higher standards will be necessary to explore regional markets. They are also conscious that the expectations of consumers in West Africa will rise within the coming years with the development of the middle class, and that quality assurance will be necessary to reach this population, starting with the quality of chicks. Most of the technical management staff of the hatcheries and breeder farms in West Africa have been confronted to other countries' standards, especially European ones, and are willing to progressively bring West African production to the same level.

For veterinary services, the fact that the program has been designed according to OIE principles also brings an additional motivation, as these standards have been endorsed by all member countries, including their own.

- **The involvement of several stakeholders (public and private).**

The initial assessment of DOC and hatchery egg production included all stakeholders involved (or potentially involved) in chick production. Since inception, the project has brought together both the private sector (producers, private vets, inputs suppliers) and the public sector (public veterinary services, representatives from the national veterinary laboratories, as well as other partners such as regional institutions including WAEMU, and international institutions OIE and FAO).

The involvement of these stakeholders allowed for refining the diagnosis and developing activities based on a consensus among partners, which in turn facilitated the quick adoption of measures.

- **A relative competition within and between countries.**

Within the countries involved, though the market is currently large enough for all operators to coexist, operators are willing to be part of the initiative and demonstrate that they can reach international standards. Between countries, the fact that small countries such as Togo are more advanced in the implementation of the activities demonstrates willingness to be at the forefront of this initiative.

- **Initiative supported by key specialists from private sector.**

During the Accra and Dakar workshops organized in April 2011, leaders from the international poultry industry were invited to facilitate most of the training sessions. These specialists came at their own costs and provided high level information on farm and hatchery management. Beyond the technical aspects involved, the fact that major European players (some of them already known by the participants) were involved in this program contributed to bring credibility to the initiative. It also strengthened business relationships between the private sector in West Africa and international inputs suppliers.

- **Flexibility given by the E-ATP project.**

Though a common chord of activities (set-up of the NSCs, audits, health monitoring program) has been proposed by E-ATP, the project's vision has been to leave as much flexibility as possible in the modalities of implementation of this program. In particular, the composition of the NSCs, the modalities of running and funding, umbrella authority were left upon the stakeholders to be defined,

in order to take into account the national peculiarities and increase the ownership of the project by the beneficiaries. This flexibility has aided the quick set up of the NSCs, and stakeholder ownership of the project approach.

- **Develop the network.**

One of the achievements of the project has been to develop a network of stakeholders involved in poultry production and in particular in DOC and HE production. This network is a necessary first step for the further development of poultry production at different levels.

For producers, having a network to turn to gives them the opportunity to discuss the issues they are facing and benefit from each other's experiences, and possibly develop economic partnerships for the supply of inputs, and create market opportunities. It also helps producers to buy their eggs or chicks from recognized farms, which they know to be adhering to minimal standards.

Between producers and public veterinary services, the lack of linkages is often a main constraint to the efficient control of diseases, where a tight partnership and trusting relationship is needed. The association of public and private stakeholders at each step of project implementation is a key to building, developing and strengthening this relationship, so that actors are used to working together and facing difficulties in collaboration. In case of an outbreak, it will be easier for a producer to seek for assistance from a well-known person used to visiting the farm. Similarly, regular meetings between veterinary services help the authorities get better information on farms' disease status.

### **Challenges encountered**

- **Local situation**

Given the low level of support provided by the E-ATP project, the achievement of the objectives of the program very much depends on stakeholders' involvement and willingness to engage in the quality assurance approach. In countries where the institutional or political situation is unfavorable, it has been difficult to set up NSCs. In Côte d'Ivoire, stakeholders, though invited, did not participate in any activity after the August 2010 workshop. In Senegal, in spite of the active involvement of the two auditors, the lack of leadership from the national poultry association and the veterinary services prevented NSC set-up.

- **Time constraints**

Though the project started in early 2010, the actual kick off activities took place in August 2010, leaving roughly one year to implement the program. Within this time span, it has been challenging to engage the stakeholders, especially as this program includes a change in practices and some level of institutional modification. This lack of time has been compensated by the interest of stakeholders and their motivation to move forward in their country.

- **Distant follow up and geographical scope of the project**

Most of the technical follow-up has been provided remotely by ASVELIS consultants, although all logistics and administrative support was organized locally. Given the relative difficulties of communication in West Africa and the fact that producers are not very used to email communication, it has been sometimes cumbersome to pass messages in due time.

## **1.3 PLANNED NEXT STEPS**

In each country, next steps will be to:

- Organize the running of the NSC and: meet on a quarterly or bi-annual basis, prepare yearly plans of operation, annual budgets, activity reports etc., manage expenses and incomes related to the activities of the NSC.

- Facilitate the implementation of the quality assurance approach and: encourage and/or organize continuing education for poultry breeding farm and hatchery personnel, auditors etc., supervise the implementation of field audits by the auditors accredited by the NSC, supervise the collection of samples and laboratory analysis.
- Conduct the certification, i.e.: formally assess the applications (including report from the auditor and report from the laboratory) submitted by farms and hatcheries for certification of compliance with the standards.
- Propose and implement an appropriate strategy of communication: inform poultry farmers about the existence of this initiative, and circulate the list of engaged and certified farms and hatcheries.
- On the institutional side, elaborate an action plan for the farms and hatcheries to be granted “compartment” status by national veterinary services. See detailed guidance on the “compartment” concept on [www.oie.int](http://www.oie.int) website.

At the sub-regional level, the planned next steps would be:

- The organization of one annual session for information and experience sharing between the NSCs.
- The establishment of a poultry organization for the sub-region, to include both anglophone and francophone countries. The ECOWAS and WAEMU commissions will be approached to assist in the formation of this sub-regional poultry association. An interim coordinating committee comprising of the heads of each national poultry association is to be constituted as soon as possible after this September meeting.
- The harmonization of procedures for sampling and laboratory analyses.
- The revision of the standards if necessary.

## **I.4 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the future, insuring a closer relationship between DOC, table egg and poultry meat producers is a priority objective to sustain the initiative, the overall goal of the initiative being to improve the quality of the poultry products for the final consumer.

This will contribute both to food safety related to poultry (helping to cope with major zoonosis such as AI or salmonellosis) and food security, by increasing production and developing income generating activities in rural areas. Indeed, local DOC producers can support small production units (e.g. egg producers) do better business. The provision of quality-guaranteed chicks can be coupled with technical support for farm management, possibly involving DOC producers. This could potentially boost egg production, which has yet to meet the demand in the sub-region, and for which transcontinental exports are almost impossible due to the fragility of the product.

The quality assurance approach initiated for DOC production could also be enlarged to other types of poultry production within a larger framework, under the umbrella of one regional institution such as ECOWAS or WAEMU. This pilot can be used as a model for other value chains, provided a regional organization (UOFA extended to English-speaking countries?) takes the lead in the initiative and insures the coordination among actors, who are far much numerous for other types of poultry production.

## **I.5 CONCLUSION**

The quality assurance approach for DOC and HE producers initiated by the USAID E-ATP project has been a success, taking into account the short lifespan of the activity and the limited support provided by the project. The set-up of a quality assurance system has garnered a significant level of

involvement and motivation on the part of producers as well as public authorities, and even support from major international poultry companies.

In terms of improving the sanitary quality of DOCs, collaboration has improved between hatcheries and breeder farm owners and public authorities (especially veterinary services). The latter are the only ones mandated to authorize exports and certify the sanitary status of a production. For veterinary services, this initiative has been an opportunity to get closer to producers and more involved in the oversight of operations, but also to provide a technical support to producers. In the future, sustaining this initiative will help West African countries overcome such challenges as declaring the country free of AI through the instatement of “compartments” (as defined by OIE) that are easier to monitor, oversee and certify as being free of a disease.



## **2. STEPS TO IMPLEMENTING A GOOD PRACTICES PROGRAM WITHIN A COUNTRY OR REGION**

The program's specific objectives were to:

- Raise awareness of public and private stakeholders about the importance of HE/DOC quality.
- Improve the quality of HEs/DOCs produced by West African enterprises.
- Demonstrate the quality of HEs/DOCs relative to international standards.
- Encourage trade in HEs/DOCs with producers which are compliant with international standards.

Step-by-step guidelines for implementing a program with the above objectives at the country level are as follows.

### **2.1 RAISE AWARENESS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF HE/DOC QUALITY**

#### **2.1.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION**

A comprehensive assessment of the value chain is necessary to better understand the needs and expectations of its different stakeholders. For instance, for this initiative, different groups of stakeholders (producers, public authorities, inputs suppliers, international organizations) were actively involved in the design and implementation of activities, though their goals were different at first sight. A high level of oversight by public veterinary services represents a cost in time and funds for industry operators. Nevertheless, improving and developing on-farm health monitoring can help farmers link to new markets outside their country, advertise the quality of their products, increase their productivity, and reduce the risk of poultry disease.

The value chain needs analysis can be used to strengthen cooperation between public authorities and private economic actors, by involving all stakeholders early on, merging their different points of view, building a consensus on the activities proposed, and averting later blockage from any one group.

As a minimal requirement, the value chain analysis should include:

- The number of producers.
- The existing and potential markets (inner and export markets), as well as the status of imports.
- The main constraints faced by the stakeholders (both private and public) to fulfill their duty or develop business.
- The regulatory framework.

### **2.1.2 SENSITIZATION**

Project leaders should use the value chain assessment as an opportunity to sensitize various stakeholders to the approach and its objectives. Sensitization should target not only the private sector but also to public authorities who are, at the end of the chain, the only ones mandated to certify the sanitary status of an operation and deliver export authorizations.

### **2.1.3 CONSENSUAL APPROACH**

Although the overall objective of the project is to support cross-border trade in DOCs and HEs within the region and support the development of poultry production and availability of poultry products within the West Africa sub-region, the oversight of reportable diseases such as AI or newcastle disease remains under the responsibility of public veterinary services.

Since the beginning of the project, the collaboration and support of national veterinary authorities has been sought to avoid any blockage and a major emphasis has been put on dialogue among actors. National veterinary services have been informed and involved at each step of the project to make sure that there was no conflict with the national programs and regulations.

The strengthening of the sanitary quality of DOCs through regular analysis and evaluation visits should be seen as a tool for veterinary services to better oversee farms rather than a competing activity.

Finally, the project aimed at strengthening the linkages between public veterinary services and the private sector, in light of the fact that veterinary services are authorized by national and international regulations to deliver the export certificates. The spirit of the project has thus been for value chain actors to interact downstream of export permit delivery, effectively turning certification into a simple formality between partners used to working together rather a final sanction of the production process.

It is also expected that this process will limit road and administrative harassment that exists in some areas, by making sure that producers are following the right procedure from the beginning in agreement with authorities.

## **2.2 IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF HE'S/DOC'S**

### **2.2.1 TECHNICAL TRAINING**

Although the technical management of hatcheries and breeder farms is generally at a good technical level, providing additional technical information is a key to improving the quality of the chicks. With regards to the objective of the project, the trainings should be oriented toward improving the sanitary status of the operation, as well as defining the standards to be reached. In addition to the actual provision of technical elements, trainings are also a means for motivating the producers to engage in the process.

For the West Africa initiative, the involvement of international poultry companies such as Hubbard-Novogen, ISA-Hendrix, CIDAPE-Petersime, Masson & Fils, CEVA, and Nutreco, has been one of the successful experiences that can be used as a model. Representatives of these companies came at their own expense and provided technical experts and documentation for the training seminar. This allowed the development of a network of major actors involved or interested in the poultry industry in West Africa, and has allowed international companies to meet potential customers, and producers to meet potential new suppliers. In addition, it also increased the project's visibility and professional credibility.

### **2.2.2 TECHNICAL MONITORING AND ADVICE**

The certification process should not only be a way to give official recognition to a small number of operators, but also to provide a large number of operators an opportunity to upgrade their practices to attain higher quality standards. In this regard, audit visits can be used to provide technical advice and recommendations on the procedures and possible facility improvements.

## **3 DEMONSTRATE THE QUALITY OF HE'S/DOC'S RELATIVE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS**

### **3.1 SET-UP OF A SANITARY ENTITY IN CHARGE OF CERTIFICATION**

In order to be recognized by professionals and consumers, certification of quality has to be provided by a competent entity. The entity must be composed of local stakeholders in order for it to take into account local context and peculiarities, and ensure impartiality and industry recognition. It is important that its membership be diverse in order to reflect differences of opinion among stakeholders and to mitigate conflicts of interest.

The institutional umbrella for this entity can vary by country (it can be housed within veterinary services, national poultry associations, etc.).

Although the funds needed to run the activities (mainly meetings and communications) of the certification committee are modest, the budget resources must be explored at the inception of the initiative, in order to ensure the sustainability of the system. In the current project, several projects have explored the possibility of raising funds among producers involved in the activity.

### **3.2 CERTIFY PRACTICES AND SANITARY STATUS**

Operators should be certified both with respect to their practices, and with respect to the sanitary status of their farm or hatchery.

Regarding the practices, facilities, procedures, biosecurity level, origin of the birds and ways to market the products should be examined with attention. Beyond the presence of sanitary barriers, disinfection protocols, etc. the actual implementation of the measures and good use of the facilities should be monitored.

Regarding the sanitary status of the farm, it has to be monitored through a defined calendar of sampling and analysis, which has to be designed according international requirements. Nevertheless, the frequency of the analysis and the diseases surveyed must be agreed upon by the producers to guarantee the respect of the protocols by the producers and their involvement in the process. Similarly, a type of contract has to be established between the producers involved and the laboratory in charge of the analysis, namely laying out the cost of the analysis. This is needed both by producers—to provision for this expense—and by laboratories—to plan for the supply of consumables and reagents, and manage workload.

Laboratories in charge of the analysis should be recognized by authorities as well as by producers in order to avoid conflict and challenges to findings.

## **4 ENCOURAGE TRADE IN HE'S/DOC'S WITH PRODUCERS COMPLIANT WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS**

### **4.1 ADVERTISE CERTIFIED OPERATORS**

Being involved in a quality assurance approach should be considered as a commercial advantage for the producers. Once they have been through the process, their customers must be informed that they are certified and that the quality of their products is guaranteed by an independent authority. A common communication strategy towards lower level producers and consumers has to be established to ensure a fair competition among certified operators.

#### **4.2 FACILITATE PROCEDURES FOR CERTIFIED OPERATORS (E.G. TO EXPORT)**

Working in close collaboration with veterinary services from the beginning of the certification process allows the facilitation of the administrative procedures for the commercialization or the export of products. Though it is necessary to maintain controls and respect the prerogatives of the veterinary authority, it is believed that knowing the operations well, and being aware of and involved in the certification approach, will encourage authorities to better guide producers and help them trade their products, minimizing harassment during transport, namely at border posts.

#### **4.3 ENCOURAGE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF “COMPARTMENTS” FOR CERTIFIED PRODUCERS ACCORDING TO OIE RECOMMENDATIONS**

To shield DOC producers from the trade consequences of poultry disease outbreaks in their country, it is strongly recommended that these producers and their national veterinary services work together to implement the compartmentalization approach. In this approach, the premises and the practices of a poultry breeding farm and a hatchery are certified as enabling the animals to have a particular sanitary status and therefore authorized to trade, even if the geographical area around these premises has a sanitary status that is not compliant with trade requirements. More information can be found on [www.oie.int](http://www.oie.int).